

Unrest Magazine

engaging systems of violence

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Unrest is a web-based magazine dedicated to advancing critical conflict theory and expanding the general discourse within the field of peace and conflict studies. Its aim is to explore the structures responsible for human discontent and cultures of violence. It seeks to address the failures of both neo-realist and relativist theories to understand the complexity of contemporary conflicts and to work for solutions free from exploitation and coercion. Unrest is founded on the belief that the seeds of discontent and violence are sown by the structures of domination. Unrest covers a range of subjects including: world politics; the global and political economy; contemporary social and political theory; philosophy, history, and art.

The magazine is an outlet for people interested in approaching these challenges through a critical lens, one that acknowledges the human and environmental costs of conflict. We do not publish rants or have political party affiliations. Unrest is an experimental approach that bridges the gap between zines and academic scholarly journals by creating a multifaceted space for both. Though Unrest advocates critical approaches to analysis and practice, its main aim is to publish intelligent and well-written work that pushes the edge of current discourses. Contributors come from a range of philosophical and ideological backgrounds. Visitors to the magazine have free access to all content. Unrest is edited and managed by graduate students at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Arlington, Virginia.

Wrong is Wrong, No Matter Who Says It: Critical Conflict Engagement

by Jay Filipi

It may seem strange, that in the first issue of a magazine devoted to theory, there is discussion of practice. Especially when Critical Conflict Theory (CCT) is a new idea just breaking onto the scene. Furthermore, CCT is yet to be well defined; hence the purpose of Unrest and the essays contained within issue zero. However, even as CCT is new, ill defined and entangled within a whole host of other theories, there are examples of people whose theory in use is primarily critical, even if it is not the espoused theory. Furthermore, illumination into Critical Conflict Engagement (the practice of CCT) may be useful to those interested in further developing or even adopting CCT as a dominant, or at least useful, theoretical frame. After all, as Jawaharlal Nehru put it “A theory must be tempered with reality.”

When speaking of an actor, or individual, that addresses conflict through a critical lens, that person is a Critical Conflict Agent. Critical Conflict Agents are individuals that address structural issues, and may not always be thought of as persons of peace, but are in fact moving the world towards a less violent place.

Malik Shabazz is the Critical Conflict Agent in mind. Born the son of a Baptist preacher in the middle of the United States, later moving to Chicago and living a life filled with conflicts both created and imposed, Malik Shabazz demonstrated the quality of action one would expect from Critical Conflict Engagement: He was aware of and opposed to structures and systems of oppression; He was a perpetually authentic and transcendent figure; He was not dogmatic in his approach to increased freedom for all.

A necessary component of Critical Conflict Engagement is awareness and understanding of structure, the way in which structure is an oppressive force in society, as well as the manner in which an individual's agency has an affect on these structures. An early memory of Malik's life was a hate crime that burned down his family's home and forced them out of the state. Later, as a child that excelled in school, he

was slapped in the face with the structures of society that expected him to not actualize his potential and to settle for less than what was possible. Disenchanted, he sought liberation in through alternate structures; structures which would be questionable to the dominant narrative. However, each of these structures turned out to be just another system generating oppression. Eventually, Malik found himself in prison. While in prison, he began to realize the power of individual agency against oppression; this liberating agency continued to be honed and developed throughout the rest of his life as he began Critical Conflict Engagement.

An important aspect of a Critical Conflict Engagement is authenticity, or a sincere and utmost dedication to the liberation of oppressed people and the belief and demonstration that everyone has the

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ability to transcend the structures of oppression. Brother Shabazz, though his faults may be many and his genesis rocky was such a figure. He began this transcendence with his self. He first taught himself to rise above the limits of formal education, to escape the oppressive world of the penitentiary and finally, after many trials and transformations, he began working to guide others to do the same and

aid them by direct assault what structures he could.

Perhaps one of the more striking aspects of a Critical Conflict Agent are non-dogmatic approaches to dealing with issues of structure. Critical Conflict Engagement may in some sense be understood as a ‘guerrilla warfare’ of conflict resolution. By this, I mean, that there is a belief in a just and free future available for all, but to reach it may require for society to pass through fire; furthermore, that in the strategy of liberation, multiple tactics must be used: ‘by any means necessary.’

There are other Critical Conflict Agents. They are often the radicals, dissidents and other unsavory characters often overlooked in dominant conflict resolution discourse. However overlooked, they are necessary and deserves greater attention. Unless, of course,

conflict resolution does not truly care about ultimate liberation, rather to concern itself with peace, and peace often serves the status quo, and the status quo is one of oppression.

“I’m for truth, no matter who tells it. I’m for justice, no matter who it’s for or against.”

-Malcolm X (Malik Shabazz)

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Main Street is Wall Street or an Interface with Slavoj Žižek's First as Tragedy, Then as Farce

By Michael English

Žižek's (2009) *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* is yet another salvo at proponents of the liberal world order. It is by no means a rigorous academic study or a philosophical treatise, but an unflinching challenge to the status quo of the (un)critical Left. Using the financial collapse of 2008 as his anchor, Žižek launches his characteristically unflattering assault on global capitalism and liberal democracy. Francis Fukuyama's utopian vision of the "end of history" serves as the running joke disparaged over and over throughout to remind readers that the West does not solely determine the delineation of history. History struck Fukuyama's dream first as tragedy on the morning of September 11, 2001 and it returned to mock it September of 2008. While the world panders to the very system and people responsible for the mess, begging that they should clean up after themselves, Žižek asserts capitalism is running on the fumes and assails the Left for their failure to pose a suitable challenge.

The work is comprised of two main essays: "It's Ideology, Stupid!" and "The Communist Hypothesis." "It's Ideology, Stupid" is a hybrid of Žižek's previous work peppered with insights from Naomi Klein's (2007) *The Shock Doctrine*. To function properly, capitalist economies require a significant amount of state socialism (welfare) to keep them going. At no time is this more apparent than during a period of financial shock or crisis. When those too big to fail actually do fail, government bailouts are the only way to keep the captains of industry on life support. What this exposes are the inconsistencies inherent within arguments postulated by liberal economists and defenders of the free market. The market is only free to run its course because of a socialist safety net provided through state intervention (an argument Rosa Luxemburg made roughly a century ago). While this critique is anything but new, the failure within the United States to critically analyze its current predicament has led to the resurgence of what at best could be considered misguid-

ed populism and at worst xenophobic nationalism.

How did we get to this moment? The paternalistic relationship between the champions of the market and the rest (read those in the West who now want a return days of 1773) was fine so long as the market provided. History it seems is a cruel judge of ideology. The events of 9-11 and the financial crisis betrayed the hypocritical underpinnings of the capitalist ideology. One cannot save Main Street without saving Wall Street; the American way of life is inextricably tied to exploitation and those being exploited (read the global Rest) might just not like the relationship as it stands. The irrationality of global capitalism is bound up in the willful ignorance of superstructure, as proven by

the continued failure of the advocates of Main Street to see a link between the two. The response from average Americans to losing their home and life savings highlights this cycle of dependency. One loses faith in the priests of Wall Street, but not in the flawed doctrine at the very heart of their suffering. We have arrived at a point where we can imagine nothing beyond global capitalism. God may have hurt us, but god dammit he's still our god!

Yet ideology is a far more insidious beast and each turn of the screw brings more of the same. We are not just blinding marching down the aisle to the altar of sacrifice. Instead, we, the critical left, are active participants through our silence and our failure of to generate real alternatives. What are we to make of the billionaire investor who wants to end malaria or the coffee company promising to give a share of its profits to a country in need? Is this not an alternative to Wall Street's greed? While this is moral pandering is at its very best, we have come to accept that the only answer to capitalism is better, more socially responsible capitalism. It is ok to exploit so long as your exploitation is lined with a heart of gold and biodegradable.

The solution? For Žižek the Left has repeatedly failed to offer convincing alternatives to global capitalism and communism is still the correct alter-

While the world panders to the very system and people responsible for the mess, begging that they should clean up after themselves, Žižek asserts capitalism is running on the fumes and assails the Left for their failure to pose a suitable challenge.

native. The second part of his text, “The Communist Hypothesis,” is the closest Žižek has ever come to offering a plan of action. Lenin’s dictum that “we must begin again from the beginning only do it better this time” is Žižek’s call for another Hegelian split. This time from within the Left to separate out the sympathizers of liberalism who are in their own right profit from misery only to turn around and repackage it as humanitarianism. The communist hypothesis is not a return to an ideal, but a reaction to antagonisms (capitalism) that generate communism’s necessity. It is a necessity driven by historical conditions. Capitalism is fundamentally flawed no matter how hip and eco-friendly. Žižek asserts that no one is going to solve these problems for the Left except the Left, so why does the Left keep waiting for someone to do their work for them? What is required is a return to serious thought and perhaps what can only be termed as “non-action.” This can be read as both a plea to let the system fail and a call to the Left to stop fooling around; “You’ve had your anti-communist fun, and you were pardoned for it – time to get serious once again!”

Žižek is always a provocative read. His call for a return to seriousness of thought should not be taken lightly, especially considering the dismal alternatives put forth as “change” by the Obama administration. His writing style is designed to shock and entertain, which can detract from his overall argument. It does not take a lot to turn people off with the term communism and Žižek certainly is not looking to make converts out of non-believers with this work. However, while one may disagree with his return to communism, it is Žižek’s willingness to provoke that we should take to heart. He rambles incessantly about pop culture, makes obscure references to the canon of dead Leftists, gushes about the brilliance of Badiou’s work, and at times makes insights so deep and penetrating they annihilate the way you previously perceived the world. Žižek’s moments of revelation are worth the price of admission and the suffering required to be assaulted by them.

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The Pedagogy of the Oppressor in 2010: Reflections on George Kent

by Derek Sweetman

The peace educator dreams of a class full of students who, after a flicker of insight, stand up and rush to the streets. However, as anyone involved in the struggle for peace knows, dreams are seldom reflected in reality. What is much more common is for students to show that they have understood what they have learned, even state their agreement with it, and then go about their lives as if nothing has changed.

In 1977, George Kent published "Peace Education: Pedagogy in the Middle Class," in the journal *Peace and Change*.^[i] His primary concern should sound familiar to anyone teaching courses related to peace and social justice. He noted that the predominant approach in these classes was to try to convince students that they lived in a system where many people are oppressed, including in most cases the students themselves. However, while students would easily agree about the existence of oppression, they would strongly resist defining themselves as oppressed. While the traditional approach was to simply teach harder, Kent proposed an alternative interpretation:

Perhaps the students are not persuaded because in fact they are not oppressed...If social structure is understood in terms of the number and quality of the alternatives it presents to the individual, then young university students must be close to being in the best of all possible worlds.

This insight leads Kent to a different approach. If the students are highly privileged, they are likely to have access to the kinds of lives and careers that contribute to oppression; they are "potential oppressors." The primary question, then, is what type of education will help steer these students away from being oppressors and "to help end the structure of dominance."

Kent discusses the work by Paolo Freire^[ii]

and concludes that we have a good idea how to teach "the oppressed," but that what we need is a pedagogy of the oppressor. Most importantly, it is easy to understand the interest in underdogs in liberation, but how do you motivate top dogs to change a system that benefits them? One approach is to focus on the ways that a top dog could be considered an underdog, but ultimately this just encourages the students' original perspectives. If I really am an underdog, and I have all this opportunity, how bad can it be?

Instead, Kent proposes that we focus on the fact that a dominating system oppresses and dehumanizes people at all levels of society, but in different ways. Instead of viewing society as being built on

the oppression of one group by another, the focus is on the way the system itself oppresses both. Liberation is also reframed from the traditional view where liberation occurs through "converting or slaying the oppressors" (38) to one where everyone becomes liberated from the oppressive situation.

I have just finished my second time teaching an undergraduate peace studies course for New Century College at George Mason University. Even though I have also taught a few other social justice oriented courses, I do not have the experience that

Kent or other peace educators bring to their discussions, but I am also facing the same question: how can we use undergraduate education to promote peace and to get students to change their relationship with the world? From my limited experience, I have noticed a shift in the perspectives and abilities of students to engage with peace education.

When Kent refers to exposing the student to their own role as an oppressor, he is primarily focusing on the students' potential participation in structural violence.^[iii] He is concerned that they will "take up jobs, a life style, and consumption habits which can only be enjoyed at the expense other people who

I believe that peace studies and other social justice courses need to spend much more time on issues of cultural violence in order to promote changes in student behavior. This is not only a more efficient path to peace education, but also more suited to the students that we see in undergraduate facilities today.

will, as a result, be deprived of the opportunity to live their lives up to their own full potential" (37). The implication here is that making students aware of their role in structural violence is the focus of the pedagogy of the middle class.

However, in my experience students today do not have difficulty grasping the idea of structural violence or the ways that it affects their life. Usually, they will say, "Oh, I know about that, we just haven't called it 'violence' before." Most of the undergraduates I see have already taken a class that either spells out systemic discrimination or oppression (usually based around race or gender) or at least one from a conservation or ecological perspective that relates their behavior to dire consequences. In fact, one of the benefits of the growth of the environmental curriculum in K-12 and undergraduate education is that students are well-exposed to the idea that their personal decisions have consequences beyond what is immediately evident. Extending that idea from the potential for harming the earth to the potential for harming other people is simpler than having to build the infrastructure of understanding for an appraisal of oppression.

In 1977, Kent could claim, "These students may not be aware of the consequences, and there may be no malice," but I am not convinced this is an accurate description anymore. While students may not be able to explain these consequences in the terms we use in peace education, they are aware that all of their actions are, in some sense, political. However, they still choose to endorse a system that perpetuates direct and structural violence. Why is this? They still operate within the systems of cultural violence that rationalize and support the existing system(s) of oppression.

The focus in peace and social justice courses on exposing structural violence can be taken too far. Not that it is not important, but every class is a struggle between the material we would like to cover and the material we have time to cover. I believe that peace studies and other social justice courses need to spend much more time on issues of cultural violence in order to promote changes in student behavior. This is not only a more efficient path to peace education, but also more suited to the students that we see in undergraduate facilities today.

There are four factors that I see contributing to contemporary students' potential to address systems of meaning and justification that support the continuing use of violence and the perpetuation of violent structures. First, they have grown up in an environment of participation in media creation. Some have gone so far as to participate in citizen-based journalism, but this is still a small group. Many more, however, participate in the creation of media cultures through Youtube, social networking services, and even

online multiplayer worlds. While these students do still consume vast amounts of cultural product that is generated for them, they recognize that this is not the only option. They participate in what has been called "remix culture," manipulating their cultural worlds by splitting, combining and integrating media in novel ways. Students know that in this sense culture and cultural meanings are fluid in a much more literal way than prior generations. They also know that they can have some influence over the cultural discourse.

This relates to the second factor, the rise of popular media criticism through the internet. Not only do these students occasionally modify, repurpose, and occasionally improve the cultural products around them, but they participate in the active discussion of these products. Even the comments attached to YouTube videos, which often degrade to name-calling and invocations of Hitler, still contain insightful ideas about representations and their relationship to both systems of meaning and to the world (although, of course, not using those terms). A visit to the blogs and sites dedicated to the discussion of popular culture makes it clear that what has been called "the democratization of criticism" is moving ahead. More people participate in the interrogation of the cultural products they consume and with that, develop a perspective slightly separated from the cultural discourses in which they live. This does not mean they are not shaped by these discourses, but that the potential for critical reflection on them is much larger.

While the first two factors relate primarily to the culture industry – films, music, TV – there is a corresponding change in political discourse. In part, this is supported by the same democratization of criticism, with the expansion of political blogs and commentary sites, even sometimes by undergraduates. More important, however, is the change in political discourse over the past twenty years. Today's undergraduates grew up in a political climate that argues more about labels and definitions than absolute truths and verifiable "facts." They grew up during the culture wars of the 1990s and the polarization of political discourse that followed. Students seem to be able easily to appreciate that ideology and interest shape the way people discuss the world. They, themselves, can present many examples of "group X calls this A, while group Y calls this B," and along with that discuss the implications for adopting various labels, even as they also describe their beliefs as essential.

The final factor is the students' participation in an educational culture that has become focused on testing, repetition and what have come to be called "standards of learning" (SOLs). Many in higher education have criticized the preparedness of students who have been taught to perform well on the SOL tests instead of thinking for themselves, and I agree. To

some extent the most difficult aspect of undergraduate education today is reorienting students to the type of learning and scholarship needed to succeed in universities, to train them to be thinkers instead of memorizers and note-takers. However, I have seen a ray of hope in this issue. Just as nonviolent movements may attempt to provoke a disproportional response from a repressive government to illustrate the injustice of their situation, some K-12 administrators have gone so far in promoting the SOL culture that students' perennial criticism of school has coalesced around their discomfort with the SOL preparation approach. Students seem to be criticizing not just the fact that they have to go to school, but the way that they are being taught.

All four of these factors contribute to the ability of these students to achieve and maintain a critical detachment from cultural and institutional systems in which they live. This detachment is vital to pursuing peace education, since without it all debates will be argued on the ground set by those systems that rationalize violence. Students in peace studies do not arrive with the ability to critique these systems, but they do arrive with the tools to do so.

Although I believe these factors strongly encourage a peace pedagogy focused initially on cultural violence, as the basis for understanding direct and structural violence, I do not think that this means we should focus more on the simplistic, violence-in-the-media debate. Today's students have been told about the evils of violence on film and TV, or in video games and music. They know that argument, but by and large do not accept it, and more than my generation was swayed by Tipper Gore's crusade against music lyrics. This is largely due to their relationship to media. They understand that different media have different effects for different people and that the relationship between the cultural product and the consumers of that product is not simply one-way. They are willing to acknowledge the extent to which their cultural environment supports direct and structural violence, but only if that concept is presented in a way that makes sense with their world.

In fact, the exercise that my students this semester agreed was the most useful and provocative was a multi-class viewing and analysis of *Inglourious Basterds*, a film that no one is going to consider pro-peace. However, it is because this was representative of their consumption practices that a peace reading of the film focusing on the production of direct, structural and cultural violence was more effective. Students were able to talk about this within the context of the film as well as in their own experience as viewers and as observers of those around them.

Similarly, we had a lot of success addressing the concepts of peace studies through a multi-week

discussion of peace education. I had added this component since the first time I taught peace studies over half the class was planning to get into K-12 education. After assigning a textbook and setting aside the time in this class, I was chagrined to learn that I had only one student concentrating on education. I believed the class was likely to grind to a halt when we started working on peace education. Surprisingly, this was not the case and some of the best work that we did the semester involved talk about how the students' prior education supported and rationalized systems of violence. Along with that, they were able to understand what was happening in class, and to critically reflect on their experience as students as well as my performance as an instructor.

Although I did not see it this way at the time, in both these cases I relied on the students' competency in criticism. Thinking about it now, it seems clear that these two exercises would work well, since they engage the world the student knows in a manner that they feel a least a little qualified to critique. From these critiques we were able to move more confidently into discussions about political justifications for war, ideas about human nature and the roots of violence, and the other topics covered in most peace education.

I am not suggesting here the mass adoption of my approach to peace education. These are only preliminary thoughts and, as I noted originally, I am not very experienced as an educator. However, I agree with George Kent that peace education must address the privileged, those who are most likely to contribute to systems of violence and oppression. If we are going to do that, we will be much more effective by focusing on the lives of our students and not simply the abstract philosophies of pacifism and violence. To develop a pedagogy of the oppressor in 2010, we should be focused on the ways that students participate in and criticize those systems of cultural violence that regularize and rationalize the violence around us.

[i] All quotes in this article, unless otherwise attributed, come from George Kent, "Peace Education: Pedagogy of the Middle Class," *Peace & Change* 4, no. 3 (Fall 1977): 37-42.

[ii] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000).

[iii] Kent is following the approach to violence described by Johan Galtung, and I rely on this as well. In short, direct violence is the infliction of physical or psychological harm by one person on another (whether in an individual or collect setting), structural violence is when systems in a society keep individuals from reaching their full potential, and cultural violence is

the system of ideas, representations and justifications that allow direct and structural violence to continue. See Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (January 1, 1969): 167-191.

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Restructuring Influence: A different path for U.S. policy

by Michael D. English

The recent agreement between Iran, Turkey, and Brazil is another challenge to the United States' already fragile foreign policy ego.[i] The agreement mediated by President Lula of Brazil attempts to resolve the tension between Iran's nuclear ambitions and the United States determination to curb them, using a regional partner, Turkey, to propose an alternative solution to additional UN mandated sanctions. Mr. Lula's efforts at non-coercive diplomacy received a lukewarm response from the United States as a successful agreement jeopardizes the effectiveness of the sanctions Senator Clinton hopes to push through the UN Security Council.[ii] Senator Clinton indicated that Iran's willingness to compromise should be considered superficial at best.[iii] The attempt to find non-coercive means for dealing with international conflict threatens what little international capital the U.S. possesses as a result of its faltering military missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. While the United States forges ahead with its plan to impose sanctions (needing the support of China and Russia), non-great power actors like Brazil are challenging the dominant frame of power politics. President Obama, much like his predecessor President Bush, seems incapable of recognizing that the U.S. no longer has the power to deter countries from pursuing and developing nuclear technology. Nor does Mr. Obama seem willing to think beyond the stale realism and coercive diplomacy of the Reagan years. The question is not whether the U.S. should keep pursuing its current strategies abroad, of which Iranian case is but one example. Instead, the United States needs to recognize its declining influence in the global arena and adjust to these challenges without the use of lethal and often, ineffective coercive means.

Mr. Obama and his team seem conflicted. On one hand they are committed to maintaining a foreign policy defined by military strength and diplomacy veiled in strong-arm threats (coercion). On the other, they seem willing to pursue occasional acts of genuine, non-coercive diplomacy. This bi-polar approach is

arguably an acceptable strategy if one can show that using both approaches produces results. Following the non-coercive route, Mr. Obama and Mr. Medvedev's nuclear arms reduction agreement was certainly a step in a positive direction. The U.S. and Russia may have trepidations, but diplomacy is the only option for pursuing a world free from the threat of nuclear war. Conversely, the strong-arm route has failed with Iran precisely because no one believes the United States is capable of following through on its threats, which makes the U.S. obsession with punishing Tehran an even more questionable policy choice. Does Iran really believe that the U.S. is only interested in sanctions given the rhetoric of the 2008 presidential campaigns? Both democrats and republicans are determined to prove themselves tough on terror and strong on national security; both claim they would not hesitate to launch an offensive first strike against Iran.

The problem the United States is facing is that it does not know how to engage in conflict other than through the failing paradigm of realism and coercive diplomacy.

What the United States needs to recognize is that its global influence is in decline because of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and this drastically alters the impact sanctions can have on Iran. The best PR team

in the world is not going to change the fact that the United States' objectives in the region are perceived as disingenuous. Mr. Obama's Cairo speech, another successful act of non-coercive diplomacy, earned him some positive fanfare in the Muslim world.[iv] Yet, his international capital is stretched thin and each mistake (read killing of civilians) in Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Pakistan chips away from his non-coercive successes. Calls for sanctions against Iran will fail to gain the support of much of the international community. Countries like China and Russia may verbally approve of the sanctions, but the question is whether they will really chose to enforce them given the distance both states have put between themselves and the two other U.S. projects taking place. Sanctions, on the whole, do little to distress the actual leadership of a country, though they certainly are a coercive means of trying to foster ripeness. Instead, they make life extremely

difficult for those in the middle and lower classes and provide excellent fodder for Iranian leadership to use as anti-U.S. propaganda. Would sanctions benefit the Green Movement or other resistance taking place on the ground right now in Iran? It is highly unlikely and at best they would serve to diminish the gains being made by advocates of social change. Yet sanctions veiled in threats of violence would certainly bolster Ahmadinejad's claims that the U.S. is trying to usurp Iranian sovereignty and would strengthen Iranian support for anti-U.S. interests in Iraq.

The problem the United States is facing is that it does not know how to engage in conflict other than through the failing paradigm of realism and coercive diplomacy. The decline in effectiveness of these measures is troubling not so much because of the exaggeration posed by external threats, but because it betrays how little attention Washington has paid to changes taking place within the borders of the United States. Since the end of the Second World War, the U.S. has relied on its influence and actions abroad to largely overlook domestic problems wrought by globalization. While people gravitate toward September 11, 2001 as the defining moment in American history, the Oklahoma City bombing was a far more telling sign of actual threats to the "American way of life." One American citizen's failed attempt to detonate an explosive device in Times Square underlines the continued irrelevance of trying to manage new types of violence (i.e. this thing we commonly refer to as terrorism) with the traditional strategies of interstate warfare. Members of the recently arrested Michigan Militia did not have relatives suffer the horror of repeated drone attacks, yet seem more than willing to partake in violence equally as horrible as that planned by Faisal Shahzad.^[v] As U.S. influence abroad starts to diminish, domestic challenges are brought to the forefront. Projecting power throughout the globe long served as a vehicle for assuming a shared vision about the United States as the leader of the free world. We are now starting to pay the price for this hubris. The loss of power and influence, as demonstrated by the willingness of other states to act multilaterally in a progressive manner, like Turkey and Brazil in dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions, highlights the United States' inability to recognize the stranglehold it finds itself in. Pursuing sanctions toward Iran at the price of ignoring domestic issues wrought by the financial collapse and the impending environmental consequences of the Horizon disaster are further indication of just how out of touch Washington is with its own perception of its international influence. Mr. Obama would do well to support the initiatives of partner countries like Brazil and Turkey, because U.S. influence is running on life support.

Turkey and Brazil's agreement is a positive ex-

ample of global governance based on non-coercive diplomacy, though each might have additional reasons for wanting this negotiation to be a success. The agreement increases both countries' influence within their respective regions and also challenges the current hierarchy within the United Nations, which views the global south as secondary players. In Turkey specifically, a successful agreement grants the ruling Islamic party, AKP, remarkable leverage in dealing with the European Union and the always-unpredictable secular Turkish military establishment. Turkey should however be careful not to follow the United States' lead by continuing its violent incursions into Iraq as a method of dealing with the PKK. Force will not solve the Kurdish question. Brazil's role helps strengthen its attempt to become a major player in both Latin America and on the world stage as an emerging industrial power. Brazil faces some serious issues at home and should be careful not to neglect them for the sake of increased international viability. While self-interest is always a factor, the unwillingness of the United States to support its allies in finding solutions to nuclear proliferation without punishing the civilian population of Iran is a continuation of its dismal policies in the region. Advocates of power politics will surely dismiss the efforts of Turkey and Brazil, but doing so fails to recognize the need for the United States to change its own behavior and adapt to the rapidly changing global environment. It is time for the U.S. to admit that it does not have the capacity to fix the mess it created in Afghanistan or Iraq and that it needs the help of partners, such as Brazil and Turkey, to extricate itself from the situation. Disparaging partner efforts, while pursuing wrongheaded policies such as sanctions, is the best way for the U.S. foreign influence to become more irrelevant than it already is.

The United States needs to re-envision its role in the world not as the leader of the free world, but as a partner in 21st Century. While some will surely bemoan this anti-elitist notion, the U.S. has gained nothing from its perch as global hegemon. U.S. leadership can cross its fingers and be thankful for what it still has left, or it can actively pursue strategies based on rebuilding our foreign and domestic policies. To do so requires those within U.S. leadership, policy and activist circles to reevaluate how we approach our thinking about international problems and potential conflicts. First, those within leadership and policy circles must come to accept the truth that realism and coercive diplomacy have exhausted themselves as strategies for dealing with a globalized world. The threat posed by radical Islam and domestic American nationalists is not the same one faced during the Cold War. The trillions of dollars pumped into defense spending are useless when you can buy a used car and pack it with propane and fertilizer for less than a thousand dollars.

One actor can produce untold destruction and death. Conflicts over values and beliefs are not going to be resolved through arms or “winning hearts and minds” when anyone with camera phone can upload the devastation from a U.S. drone attack onto YouTube. We must come to understand that cheap, low-grade technology is changing international and domestic politics. Using the unmanned harbingers of death designed by defense contractors does not put U.S. personnel out of harms way. It only increases the determination of victims and relatives to seek retribution.

Second, a policy of engagement means a commitment to resolving conflicts without threats of violence. Deciding to work with Iran on nuclear issues requires a commitment to remove the military option from the table. Frankly, no one believes the United States can afford to invade Iran or that it could muster enough domestic support to do so. If the U.S. wants to maintain any credibility as a state dedicated to Enlightenment values and respect for others, it will take the opportunity to exit gracefully from the stage and let its partners take the lead. Brazil and Turkey offer a far more inspiring vision of the future than China or Russia. Democracy in the Middle East and other regions will not look like Western democracy no matter how hard we try to make the pieces fit that way.

Finally, there must be an embrace of new ideas within Washington derived from a post-party, youth-based resurgent interest in governance. If the United States wants to remain an influential player in the world, the dinosaurs of the Cold War need to leave Washington. U.S. policy will not change if it keeps coming back to the same sources for information and strategy. Contractors and think tanks developed during the Cold War do not possess the creativity or insight to develop non-coercive strategies for the future. Relying on organizations that profit from war to promote the vision of a sustainable future is a dead end. Offensive-defensive has proven itself a failed strategy and unable to deter extremist violence. Now is the time for a dramatic restructuring of American politics. If the gains of our rapidly changing technology are to be harnessed, it must come from the youth who understand how to interface with these advances. To capitalize on these changes require the youth to think beyond petty partisan politics and build strategies focused on rethinking the real challenges to democracy and human safety: globalization and environmental collapse.

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Abrogation and Misuse: Privatization of Military Force and Militarization of Aid in the Modern State

By Sarah Rose-Jensen

Legitimate use of force is one of the defining characteristics of a nation-state, but the United States seem determined to flip this legitimacy on its head and abrogate authority over some military matter while asserting military authority outside of the traditional military realm. Private security companies are paid far more than U.S. soldiers to fight in far corners of the world. Meanwhile, the Department of Defense continues to abrogate the functions of USAID and NGOs in the disbursement of humanitarian and development aid. In the U.S., soldiers and veterans are joining militias to protect the people from the government. Everyone seems to be staking a claim on the legitimate use of force and authority. It is enough to make the traditional theorists spin in their graves. A large percentage of the personnel on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan are contractors, rather than military or civilian employees. This is problematic in the first place because it indicates an inability or unwillingness on the part of the military to competently fight its own wars. Though I always hope we won't invade another country, I know our government is likely to get entangled in foreign wars, and I want out next invasion to consist of U.S. soldiers, paid by, and thus accountable to, the people. The US government has declared that in Iraq, contractors are not accountable to Iraqi law. Nor do they seem to be accountable to U.S. law. In December, a federal judge dismissed charges against five Blackwater guards charged with unlawful killing of civilians. The only one for whom charges were not dropped was the one who had already plead guilty. It seems rather suspect that this gentleman considered himself guilty murder while his colleagues were not culpable. It remains to be seen whether contractors will be held accountable to international law. Considering the conviction rates and speeds of international courts post-Nuremberg, most contractors won't live long enough to find out, having died peacefully of old age before indictments are issued and judgments passed.

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There is one arena where the state is managing to retain control though: the disbursement of humanitarian and development aid. This is also the task the military is the least qualified to handle. Aid recipients are often against the increased use of military disbursement of humanitarian aid, as are the NGOs who were traditionally charged with the task. Why then do we continue to shift disbursement of the foreign aid budget and supplies to military agencies? The case of aid work in Afghanistan illustrates strikingly why militaries should not be the primary providers of humanitarian aid and why aid organization should not be asked to engage in the work traditionally done by the military.

In January of 2010, eight international and Afghan aid organizations – Oxfam International, Afghanaid, CARE Afghanistan, Act on Aid, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, and TroCaire – released a report and suggestions on militarization of aid in Afghanistan. The Oxfam report argues that aid provided or directed by military organizations is too often focused on a “quick fix” that does little to serve the population in the long term. International aid organizations have been on the ground in Afghanistan for many years, far longer than the current military operations have been in existence. These aid organizations are committed to remaining in the country well beyond the current war. It is these organizations, not the governments and militaries waging war in the country, that should be responsible for the primary disbursement and implementation of aid in Afghanistan. An April 2008 Congressional report on aid in Afghanistan found that “the lack of planning led PRTs to pursue short-term ‘feel good’ projects (with success measured by money spent or satisfaction of the local governor) without consideration of larger strategic and capacity-building implications” (U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services). Focusing on infrastructure such as school buildings, while ignoring needs such as trained and qualified teachers,

school supplies, and safe and reliable transportation for students does not help Afghanistan's civilian population. The military model is also not sustainable unless the military presence in Afghanistan is sustained, something the American and Afghan people have indicated they do not want. Aid should be provided by the aid organizations that will be in the country long after foreign militaries pull out.

The problem is not just that governments and militaries are taking over the jobs traditionally done by aid organizations. Donor governments increasingly demand that aid agencies in conflict zones and potential conflict zones engage in counterinsurgency work – a clear violation of humanitarian space. The United States has also defined aid in Afghanistan as a “non-lethal weapon” to be used to “win the hearts and minds of the indigenous population to facilitate defeating the insurgents” (U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2009). This totally contravenes the idea of “humanitarian space” and has a great potential to damage the future of any aid operations in the country; those implemented directly by militaries and those of aid agencies. Once the local people associate aid with the U.S. Army, they will forever associate it with the Army. There is an understandable lack of trust from some Afghans toward U.S. personnel -- in addition to the fact that we've bombed their country, contractors and troops have been accused of crimes, both garden variety and of war. It will be difficult for Oxfam or CARE to convince people that the aid they are providing is truly humanitarian aid, and not tied to a political project. For example, CARE has found that government supported schools are more often targeted for attack than those built by NGOs in partnership with local communities (<http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/quick-impact-quick-collapse-jan-2010.pdf>). If aid and the military continue to be tied together in Afghanistan, it is unlikely that militants will continue to separate between governments and aid providers. No one organization or agency can do all things. The military is simply not best suited for providing humanitarian aid, and the idea that it does provide aid contravenes much of the notion of humanitarian aid. Greater coordination between aid organizations, governmental agencies, and local partners is desirable, but organizations should be allowed to do what they do best, rather than attempt to provide services that they are not well suited for or which compromise their central mission, whether they be militaries or aid organizations.

Of course, governments have used mercenaries as long as wars have been fought and governments and individuals have long pursued wrong-headed methods of “helping” those less fortunate. So, is any of this really new or more threatening than what came before it? Maybe not. However, when viewed in the context of the ways other state structures are being weakened

around the world -- for example, complete state failure in Somalia and the growth of corporate control globally -- it is an interesting and alarming trend. The modern state is a fairly new development, historically, and is bound to decline eventually. The question is not if, but when and what will it be replaced with. Private companies and armies seem to be one possibility. Perhaps the US could benefit from some the nation-building and democracy we are intent on foisting off on other nations, if we want to retain the government's legitimate control over the country.

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Why Congress Fails on Financial Reform

By Jason Reader

The growing public resentment of the mega financial institutions on Wall Street is without doubt justified as a critique and criticism of laissez-faire capitalism as an ideological force. Much as the collapse of the Soviet Union spelled the demise of communism as a global ideological force, the financial crisis that started September 2008 with the collapse of Lehman Brothers is foretells the death throes of free market capitalism as a global ideological force. With the rise of “state capitalism” (Bremmer, 2009), the world is beginning to look a little more like George Orwell’s 1984. With the apparent takeovers of General Motors, AIG, and now perhaps British Petroleum’s North American operations, the United States, along with China, Europe, India, and other quasi-capitalist states, has moved into the business of hands-on managing its economy. There are three problems with government intervention into artificially or non-market based sustaining of the financial system and its mega-financial institutions: ethical responsibility, lack of accountability, and continued exploitation. First, reforming the financial system through government intervention will not bestow upon it the ethical responsibility necessary to sustain the economic well-being of the United States and the global economy. Financial institutions have an ethical responsibility for sustaining, economically, the communities that they intimately exploit. By not adhering to the ethical responsibility of economic sustainability, financial institutions are constantly ‘playing chicken’ with the destruction of the very economies and communities that they exploit. Part of a financial institution’s ethical responsibility of economic sustainability is to know the impact that the institution has on the gross domestic product; the larger a financial institution’s share of GDP, the larger the financial institution’s obligation to do its part in sustaining the economy.

Second, artificially sustaining financial institutions through government intervention belies the

fact that some financial institutions (AIG, Lehman Brothers, Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, etc.) have grown ‘too big’ for maintaining the Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest- type of autocratic corporate governance, which is responsive only to the shareholders and not to the taxpayers of the United States nor the larger global economic system. The banks and other financial institutions (Goldman Sachs, etc.) are simply too large in terms of their impact on America’s gross domestic product to maintain superstructures of centralized hierarchy without making their decision-making processes accountable to the American taxpayers and the larger global economic system, regardless of shareholder’s opinions. These financial institutions should

not be responsible to a few privileged shareholders.

Third, government intervention permits the exploitation of disadvantaged communities to continue for the benefit of a few powerful elites, whose worth to society is no greater than that of the people they oppress. To say that these elites at the mega-financial institutions deserve reprimand for the audacity of their failures is absurd, plain and simple. Where is the help for Main Street and all the people who had

to foreclose on their homes and their way of life? Why do these financial institutions which failed because of their greed get a second chance? I do not care about ‘too big, too fail,’ which apologizes for the disregard of the well-being for entire classes of people. Granted letting corporations fail is truer to the ideal of the laissez-faire free market; however, the failure of these behemoths would starkly reveal the ‘contradictions’ in the superstructure of capitalism by means of capitalism’s inability to sustain itself as a viable system.

The argument by Washington is that if the mega-financial institutions were allowed to fail, then the rest of the economy would have plunged into a Great Depression. I agree with that assessment and I think it should have been allowed to happen. A depression would have caused massive suffering, but the

A depression would have caused massive suffering, but the blood would have finally stained the hands of capitalists. Instead, the untold suffering of the millions living in poverty is allowed to persist for the benefit of a privileged few.

blood would have finally stained the hands of capitalists. Instead, the untold suffering of the millions living in poverty is allowed to persist for the benefit of a privileged few. The bailout of Wall Street is being financed by the blood, sweat, tears, and continued exploitation of the 'working-poor' whether they be lower or middle class. I do not know how to prevent the suffering of a depression caused by capitalism's failure, but I do know it will be the wake-up call for true revolutionary action necessary to finally end the oppression of poverty. I admit this sentiment is antithetical to the mythical 'pursuit of happiness,' but as the saying goes 'nothing's free.' It's time that we started taking our licks and bumps for the betterment of future generations. The failure of capitalism would provide the necessary impetus and political will for the United States and the rest of global economic system to embrace real systemic change in the form of new economic models, ideologies, and policies.

Speculative financial instruments act like a cancer for the financial institutions eating away at the real capital of these institutions by placing too much stake in the high-risk, high-return gambling. My point is that these mega-financial institutions should be allowed to fail, because they gambled and lost big on their bets. If we are to abide by the absurdity of the libertarian free market ideology and follow it to its logical end, then the financial institutions should be allowed to fail. Gambling on such high-risk speculative financial instruments is seemingly a side-effect of a large laissez-faire free market ideology which emphasizes the aggrandizement of profit even at the stake of long-term sustainability.

If the capitalist economy failed because of the gambling and speculation of the financial institutions, then the capitalist economy deserved to fail for the stupidity of allowing such unsustainable practices within one of its prominent sectors. What happened to the arguments that 'the market knows best' when the market clearly favored a profit-motive concentrated on short-term gains. If the capitalist market (minus the intervention of the United States government and taxpayer) failed to correct the unsustainable practices of the financial institutions and thereby causing its own collapse should be allowed to collapse out of sheer ignominy. I think that capitalism as a concept and ideology would have died in September of 2008 without the intervention of the United States government, therefore the onus on the continued exploitation of capitalism should be placed squarely on the shoulders of the politicians in Washington. The politicians bought this problem; they now own this problem by way of admitting that market no longer knows what is best for the market.

Perhaps the free-market laissez-faire style capitalism is dead as an ideology. Instead, it has been re-

placed by a form of state capitalism, which is optimized by politicians in Congress, the Treasury Department, and the Federal Reserve who make the decisions that govern our economic fortunes. Ian Bremmer (2009) writes for Foreign Affairs that at least in the developing world "the state's heavy hand in the economy is signaling a strategic rejection of free-market doctrine." Bremmer also notes that "across the world, the free market is being overtaken by state capitalism, a system in which the state is the leading economic actor." If state capitalism is truly the wave of the future, then surely the current financial reform legislation is just the tip of the iceberg in the government's intervention in managing the economy. By artificially sustaining capitalism past its nature death throes, Washington is embracing the new state capitalism over free market capitalism moving one step closer to economic fascism and totalitarianism, in other words: Orwell's 1984. Washington's saving grace from totalitarianism is the remaining semblance of democracy which has not yet been bought by special interest, namely our individual vote on Election Day. When an economic ideology can no longer justify its own existence by means of internally sustaining itself as a superstructure, then it is time that we, as Americans and members of the larger global economic system, move past this atrocity that we call capitalism and begin the process of creating new economic models and ideas.

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Should energy go local?

Written by **Colin J. Gardner**

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There are many problems associated with re-tooling how America obtains its energy, more specifically, how it is generated and transmitted to the consumer. Obama is faced with some energy decisions that will affect the shape of the country indefinitely.

We created a vast federal highway system that only created suburbia, and more cars, more development, and more “stuff”. The question is: should energy be generated and distributed locally? Or should it follow the same ethos of our current energy infrastructure and build a large energy “back bone” across the country to distribute energy from mega-sources?

These very questions arose in the state of Minnesota. Regulators were considering the construction of new power lines that connected with proposed solar farms in the Dakotas at a cost of \$1.7 billion. The thought of all that copper wire and disrupted landscapes makes my head spin.

Of course, wind energy investors like T. Boone Pickens were delighted by this prospect, as if his life depends on socking away another billion this year hiding under the cloak of “going green”.

Thankfully, the Minnesota regulators took a step backward and looked at the issue from a different angle. Considering that in modes of bulk transmission around 7% of the energy is lost, and the unbelievable cost of the project, the regulators found a more simple and economic solution. They decided to develop a bunch of small 10-40 megawatt wind farms located within the state, producing about 600 megawatts and able to use their existing grid system.

This model poses an interesting solution to the energy woes in America. Perhaps we have been thinking about energy in the wrong way with large projects that are located in rural areas. We are in the habit of pushing the most unsightly and polluting aspects of urban life into rural or wilderness areas, which raises many social and environmental justice issues. We are not shy about building coal-fired power plants on sov-

ereign Native American lands, while they live without power and sometimes no running water.

In Arizona, for example, it would seem reasonable to build a large solar facility, like the one being constructed south of the Phoenix metro area. It would create jobs and provide a clean source of energy. But on what land is it being built, and how far away is it from the consumer? Conversely, it would also be possible to place those panels on rooftops, so that the citizen has direct access to their energy, almost wirelessly. In this scenario, little to no energy is lost in transmission, and precious metals do not have to be mined from the ground to construct the proposed gargantuan transmission lines. In addition, local economies benefit directly as jobs are created, and not in another state or region.

Although the Minnesota model transcends scale in a way, it is important to acknowledge that this model does not apply to every situation. Some localities, and even some states, do not have the climate or geological conditions conducive to small-

scale (or even large scale) renewable energy sources. But overall, the United States has hit the lottery in potential for renewable energy. We have a wide variety of renewable energy potentials. Pushing for our energy to be in the complete control of local entities, or more desirably at the personal level, is a scary thought for many government agencies and energy companies. Imagine taking away the power (social that is) from these companies to operate energy monopolies. There is of course no end of political resistance to such a scenario.

The prospect of the people having the power and not corporate or government interests is heart warming. It is important to resist these pervasive neo-liberal agendas. We do not have to commoditize everything, and we do not have to profit from everything. We all have the right to gaze.

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Reasons to Kill:

A conversation with Richard E. Rubenstein

By The Editorial Cell

Q: In REASONS TO KILL, you study the arguments that pro-war advocates have made throughout American history as we've mobilized for war. What reoccurring themes did you find in our rhetorical and philosophical strategies?

RR. This book is not about the factors that motivate elites to make war. Elites have many reasons to fight, including economic interests, geopolitical ambitions, and domestic political motives. The basic question I ask is: What convinces ordinary Americans to send their kinfolk, friends, and countrymen to kill other people and risk their own bodies and minds in battle? The overall answer, I find, is that we are persuaded to fight by appeals to widely shared and deeply held moral values – values associated with what some call our civil religion. The most common themes are these:

Self-defense. We have a moral right and duty to defend the nation against unjustified attacks. The problem is that we have vastly expanded the definition of self-defense. The “self” we feel justified in defending is not just America’s soil and people but U.S. troops, intelligence agents, civilian employees, private contractors, and allied forces around the globe. Equating this imperial apparatus with American proper creates what I call “imperial circularity” and generates an endlessly expanding war.

Evil enemies. We have a moral duty to destroy diabolical leaders who commit atrocities against their own people, threaten their neighbors, and seek world domination. The problem is that we often label adversaries absolutely evil when they are not really satanic and can be dealt with in ways short of total war. To justify

U.S. participation in World War I, we converted Kaiser Wilhelm II into the “Beast of Berlin,” and to justify attacking Iraq we diabolized Saddam Hussein. Sometimes we label a whole people evil, which can lead to violence on a horrific scale.

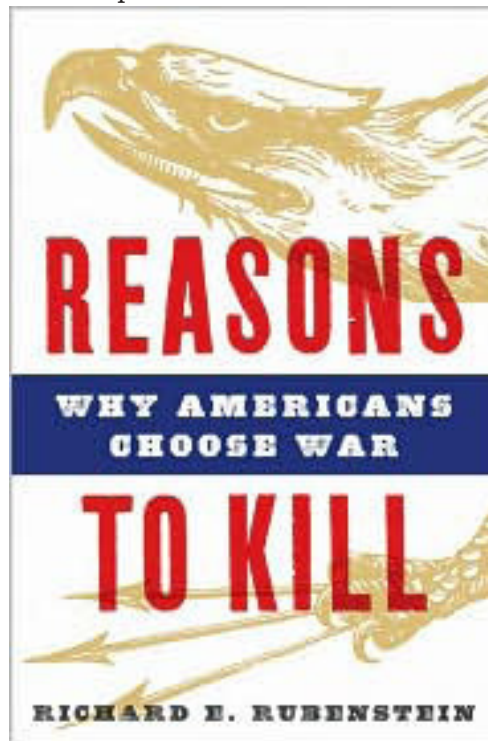
Humanitarian interventions and moral crusades.

We have a special mission to secure the values of democracy, human rights, civil order, and moral decency around the world, by military means if necessary. The problem is that the U.S. is a superpower with its own interests and cultural biases, not a disinterested liberator of the oppressed. More often than not, as in the case of the Spanish-American War, we end up acting exactly like the tyrants and aggressors we oppose.

Patriotic duty. We earned our freedom by fighting for it. When Uncle Sam asks us to fight, even die, for our nation, we should be prepared to do so. The problem is that patriotism has never meant killing and dying on command. Generations of American patriots have demanded that the government justify war by showing that there is a real threat to the nation and that violence is needed to counter it. What I call communal patriotism creates a special problem by excluding anti-war dissenters from the American

community.

National honor. If we don’t demonstrate that we are willing to fight, we will lose face and credibility, bad people will take advantage of us, and we will become a humiliated second-rate nation. For the same reason, once we have committed the nation to a war, we cannot retreat or withdraw without dishonor. The problem is that this is not a moral doctrine; it is an insecure cowboy machismo posing as morality. Most American



wars since the end of World War have ended in something short of victory, and most should not have been fought at all.

No peaceful alternative. Negotiations to avert war have failed, or they would be fruitless, since the enemy cannot be trusted to keep its word. The only alternative to war is therefore dishonorable appeasement. The problems are that the U.S. refuses to negotiate in good faith as much as any other nation, and that, even where it is attempted, negotiation falls short of conflict resolution. Without serious attempts at conflict resolution – that is, ending violence by eliminating its underlying causes – war is never a last resort.

You note the United States has the most bellicose record of all modern nations and in REASONS TO KILL are most curious about why people follow. Can you tell us a bit about your ideas here?

There are two common answers to this question. One: Americans are naïve and easy to manipulate and will buy any war that is cleverly packaged and marketed. I call this the innocent dupe theory. Two: Americans are weapons-loving warriors who like to fight: the frontier killer theory. Both theories contain part of the truth, but neither gets to the heart of the matter, which is that we are a people who will not ordinarily fight unless we are convinced that a war is necessary and morally justified.

Americans have been sold a bill of goods in the past, from President Polk's dubious claim that the Mexican army had invaded America in 1846 to President Bush's claim that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and was in league with al Qaeda. But we are not so much tricked into fighting as persuaded to fight by arguments and images that emphasize the evil nature of some adversary and our own innocence and vulnerability. Similarly, the U.S. has incubated the sort of local warrior culture described by Senator Jim Webb in his book, *Born Fighting*. Nevertheless, we are not impelled to fight because of the Appalachian frontier tradition – if that were true, American history would not demonstrate so many strong and widespread anti-war movements. We choose war, sometimes, because we are convinced that we need to fight for reasons of self-defense or moral obligation, and that there is honorable alternative.

Speaking of anti-war movements, public approval has been low for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, yet antiwar mobilizations haven't occurred on the scale that they did during Vietnam. Why do you think this is?

Some think that the principal reason is the absence of the draft and the creation of professional armed forces. Professionalization of the military plays some role, but I do not think that it is the main reason. We drafted men to fight the Korean War, and that did not generate a mass anti-war movement even though the war became very unpopular. Conversely, we did not draft soldiers to fight the War of 1812 or the Iraq War, but there was enormous opposition to those conflicts nevertheless.

Three reasons for today's passive discontent seem most important to me: fear, cooptation, and recession.

Fear: Americans are still traumatized by the September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda attacks, and fears of a new attack are kept alive by reports of new conspiracies hatched and new plots broken up. Of course, there is reason to be concerned about terrorist attacks, but the fear in America goes way beyond that in other nations, such as Britain and Spain, that have experienced more recent attacks. I believe we are panicking because of concerns that are not generally recognized, including the disturbing recognition that we are not a "chosen people" exempted from material, social, and spiritual problems that affect the rest of the world. I think we are beginning to recognize that our empire is tottering – and that's a scary prospect for many people.

Cooptation: Barack Obama's election raised expectations for a new deal both in domestic and in foreign policy. Even though many of his supporters are disappointed in the results so far, many are unwilling to abandon their original hopes. So far at least, there has been no Great Betrayal equivalent to Lyndon Johnson's commitment of half a million troops to Vietnam, which triggered the anti-war movement of the sixties. Moreover, many of Obama's policies are oracular – they mean what people want them to mean. Conservatives can interpret his escalation of the Afghan War as a sign of his toughness, while liberals can interpret the same escalation as a preliminary to negotiations.

Recession: Technically, the recession is over, but grave economic problems persist. The result is exactly the opposite of what happened at the height of the great economic boom of 1945-65, when people's expectations soared, inspiring a series of group liberation movements, detonating a cultural revolution, and generating a new sense of entitlement and solidarity among young people. People do not usually mobilize en masse against war if they are worried about finding jobs or defending the cultural gains of the past against

attack. By the same token, if America remains bogged down in endless wars, both expectations and anger can be expected to rise as the economy revives and the trauma of September 11 abates. One further condition may be necessary: a shocking event equivalent to the Tet Offensive of February 1968 in Vietnam. It is impossible to say what form this will take – but, given our involvement in violent activities around the world, a significant shock seems likely.

What were your thoughts on Barack Obama's Nobel Prize acceptance speech?

I found the speech very disappointing – a few hoary clichés about war and peace flimsily disguised as a new foreign policy. “War, in one form or another, appeared with the first man,” Obama said. “At the dawn of history, its morality was not questioned; it was simply a fact, like drought or disease.” This will be news to most evolutionary scientists, anthropologists, and archaeologists. The evidence suggests that early humans were peaceful creatures and that war did not appear until people began settling in densely populated river valleys, where classes of warriors and priests first appeared. Moreover, almost as soon as this happened, prophetic figures like Isaiah of Jerusalem (8th century BCE) arose to question the morality of collective violence.

Even more questionable was Obama's use of the theory of the Just War to justify America's current “war on terrorism.” “Evil does exist in the world,” said the president. “A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda's leaders to lay down their arms.”

How does Obama know this? Has he offered to meet with al Qaeda? Obviously not. The president is quite right about Hitler – but the analogy between the Nazis and Islamist extremists is flawed. Since World War II, every American president who wants to fight a war, from Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam to George W. Bush in Iraq, has labeled the enemy of the moment a new Adolf Hitler. Hitler made an agreement with Britain and France at Munich and then tore it up. But how does Obama know that negotiations with al Qaeda would be useless? He makes this assertion because he is convinced that they are diabolical and that one cannot negotiate with the devil.

This is a mistake. Islamist terrorists are relatively, not absolutely, evil. They are the violent, misguided fringe of a much larger movement with real grievances against America and the West. Bin Laden is the tip of an iceberg that can be melted – but not by the methods

of total war used against Hitler and the Nazis. I would not negotiate with Usama bin Laden either, in the sense of bargaining with him, but I would offer to meet with any and all Islamic leaders who want to discuss what is wrong with their relationship with America and what to do about that. Such a meeting should be strictly confidential, open to influential figures who are not official leaders of any nation or group, and facilitated by impartial conflict resolvers. It might mark the beginning of a new era in Western-Islamic relations.

This kind of conflict resolution is exactly what the British and Irish did in connection with Northern Ireland – they used the services of an impartial peace-maker – America's George Mitchell – to bring together violent extremists on both the Catholic and Protestant sides for serious analytical talks. The result was a split in each movement. The ultras on both sides isolated themselves, and militants who were calling each other children of the devil shortly before conclusion of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement ended up sharing power in a new Northern Ireland.

The final disappointment in Oslo was the president's insistence that the U.S. “has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens and the strength of our arms,” and that we did this not for the sake of power, but out of the goodness of our hearts. This is a grotesque misreading of history. Six decades ago, the U.S. fought the Korean War, which could be justified, up to a point, as an effort to defend South Korean independence against a North Korean invasion. But the vast expansion of American power since then – with hundreds of military bases in more than 60 countries – has far more to do with U.S. geopolitical and economic interests than with “global security.” President Obama equates American power with global security. He is unwilling to say the “E word” – empire – or to recognize that trying to maintain an American empire makes both the world and the United States less secure.

Do you believe there is such a thing as a “good war”?

I believe that there have been a few justifiable wars, although very few, and that even these can be justified only in part. Justifying war involves three requirements: the war must be necessary, it must be fought for a good cause, and it must cause the minimum amount of human suffering consistent with vindicating that cause. No war since Korea has fulfilled these essential requirements . . . and even Korea seems to me a marginal case, since it became a war of conquest when U.S. forces crossed the 38th parallel in order to unify the nation under American control.

World War II was necessary because it proved impossible to negotiate with Hitler or the Japanese government. (Hitler himself would not have been a factor if Germany had been treated decently at the end of World War I, instead of being impoverished and humiliated, but that is another story.) World War II was also fought for a partially good cause, since we could not co-exist with fascist regimes that enslaved and exterminated millions of people, and that commanded the most powerful economies outside the U.S. The violence used to defeat the Axis powers was justified up to a point, but we ended by subjecting enemy civilians to wildly excessive force. It was unnecessary and wrong to cause a firestorm over undefended Dresden, incinerate Tokyo, and drop atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, taking hundreds of thousands of lives when our enemies were on the verge of surrendering.

At present, in my view, there is no way to justify a “War on Terrorism” that obfuscates America’s imperial role, portrays the leaders of mass movements like the Taliban and Hezbollah as isolated terrorists, corrupts and brutalizes societies subject to U.S. intervention, and inflames the structural situation that is generating anti-Western violence. It is not just a new foreign policy we need but a new way of understanding ourselves and the world we inhabit. In developing this new understanding, I think that critical conflict theory has a crucial role to play.

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The Benign Subjugation of Conflict Resolution

By Derek Sweetman

The subject of the study of conflict is conflict, but the subject constituted through the discourse of conflict resolution is something much different. Michel Foucault provides a model for the investigation of the subject within professional-academic discourses through his investigations of mental health,¹ medicine,² and criminology,³ but his analyses focus on dominant discourses within society. These subjects are practically universal within the societies considered. What, then, are we to do when faced with a professional-academic discourse like conflict resolution, one that is most definitely not dominant? Within the domestic area, the dominant subject relating to conflict is determined by legal discourse. In the international arena, it is bounded by power politics and realism. Luckily, Judith Butler's analysis of the subject created by feminism in *Gender Trouble*⁴ is a good guide. Like conflict resolution, feminism is a subaltern discourse, one that specifically defines itself in opposition to dominant ones. Additionally, feminism, like conflict resolution, is a regulative discourse, one aimed at controlling human behavior.

In order to further understand the subject in conflict resolution, I have chosen to try and identify the characteristics of this subject by examining a collection of standard works in the field. These move from traditional mediation, such as Christopher Moore's *The Mediation Process*⁵ and Bernard Mayer's *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution*⁶, to newer variations like narrative mediation⁷ and transformative mediation⁸, to community and group intervention⁹, and inter- or intranational efforts.¹⁰ My goal is to see if there is a coherent subject that could be identified from these varied sources. Viewed from within the field there is a great deal of distance between international problem-solving workshops and narrative interpersonal practice, but I suspected there was quite a bit of commonality as well.

This effort is worthwhile for two primary reasons. First, conflict resolution is continuing its struggle to develop into a true profession. Making clear the shared subject provides an orienting point that reinforces the idea that, to some extent, we are all doing the same work. This is the kind of idea around which it is possible to develop a repertoire of practice, one that can engage conflict on a number of levels. Second, little critical work has been done from within the field. Identifying the conflict resolution subject will enable us to ask relevant questions about the relation of this subject to our goals. Butler shows that the subject created by a discourse is not guaranteed to serve the political goals of the discourse in every case. As such, it is possible the conflict resolution subject does the same.

There are three attempts to incorporate a Foucault-inspired analysis of mediation that have some bearing on the current enterprise. George Pavlich examines how "the governmental power of community mediation would entail not only discipline but also *techniques of self* geared toward producing non-disputing self-identities."¹¹ Morgan Bagshaw relies on Foucault to identify the points of power through which individual mediators act.¹² And finally, Brigg uses Foucault to undermine culture-ignorant views of mediation, promote new cross-cultural forms, and examine the function of power in mediation.¹³ All three of these critiques are interesting, but none take the time to dig down and uncover the conflict resolution subject itself. Instead, they focus on the power implications of mediator action. To truly understand the subject in conflict resolution, we should look at the constitutive implications of mediation and conflict resolution discourse.

Additionally, all three authors focus narrowly on the practice of mediation within communities not on the conflict resolution project as a whole. There is much to be gained by examining the totality of conflict resolution as its own project instead of building up from the individual actions and interventions of its practitioners. In talking of the conflict resolution project, I am referring to the "movement" that came about from the interaction of alternative viewpoints from the field of interna-

tional relations, like John Burton's, and innovations originally developed in labor relations that later coalesced into the practice of Alternative Dispute Resolution. Bush and Folger go so far as to call this the "mediation movement" and to note the great spread of the practice of mediation and other forms of facilitated, communication-based conflict resolution since the 1960s.¹⁴

While Bush and Folger look at this expansion and see more conflicts being mediated and more mediators and practitioners getting involved, it is also possible to see this as an expansion of the conflict resolution subject, slowly gaining traction and spreading. Although this is not the terminology most would use, it is the goal of the conflict resolution project: to see more and more conflicts addressed through communications-based, non-violent resolution mechanisms. The core of this project is in the practices of mediation (facilitated communication) and negotiation (unfacilitated communication). This is one major distinction between conflict resolution and the other discourses that address conflict. Fields like law and development have their own approaches and constitute their own subjects, which in the end have little to do with those of conflict resolution. All major forms of intervention that can rightfully be called "conflict resolution," as opposed to being conflict-related efforts from other disciplines, have communication between belligerents as their primary method, although of course there is an immense variation in how and where this communication takes place, who is involved, and so forth.

The ultimate goal of the conflict resolution project is the transformation of society such that conflicts are always dealt with constructively. This is a commonality between Johan Galtung's positive peace¹⁵ and Burton's "Conflict Resolution as a Political System,"¹⁶ as well as Adam Curle's "transformation through shared humanity"¹⁷ and the community mediation center movement's idea that "mediation effects will spread like a virus through the community as a whole," the "peace virus" theory labeled by Daniel Crary.¹⁸

This project is larger than the distinction between interest and need, resolution and management, or narrative and transformative. In a sense, the conflict resolution project is banking on Žižek's idea that particularity can mask universality.¹⁹ Individual actors, acting for their own reasons, can reinforce universality, as happens within capitalism. In this case, universality is seen as a good thing, an alternative to violence, militarism, and destruction. Viewed from this perspective, it is clear that the conflict resolution project is regulative. It seeks to change behavior and encourage individuals to move closer to a norm of constructive conflict activity, to encourage (enforce?) a "a sequence of procedures which can be applied to any relationship from that of a man and woman in marriage to that of nations at war."²⁰ As with most regulatory discourses, this seems like a good idea to those within the discourse – and one that I personally support.

How, then, should we go about locating the conflict resolution project's subject? The first step should be to know what it is not. The primary exclusionary boundary for the conflict resolution subject is that it is not the intervenor/practitioner. The subject is literally the subject of the intervention, not its agent. In order to constitute it, conflict resolution must make a clear distinction between those within the conflict and those without. We go so far as to label the external intervenor the "third party" or "third side," to reinforce that it is not the primary party, not the first side. The subject is always the Other from the perspective of the intervenor. I suspect the need to maintain this distinction is behind the desire to claim neutrality or impartiality on the part of the third party. Doing so helps prevent capture by the Other and the breakdown of the subject and the agent. But what about purely negotiated solutions? In those cases, there is not necessarily an intervenor. Below, I will argue that the conflict resolution subject is transitional. In successful negotiation, that subject is post-transition, it has become what the conflict resolution project seeks and is regulating conflict for mutual benefit on its own.

The second step in identifying the subject is to realize that one of the categorizing functions of conflict resolution is to see individuals as group-members not atomized individuals. This means that previously independent subjects are treated as a homogenized subject. This is most clear when we are talking about intergroup conflict, but there is a homogenizing function in interpersonal mediation as well, where the process makes presumptions about participants that encourage the recognition of similarity over difference. There is a negative and a positive result of this. On the negative side, this means the potential for a wide range of responses to conflict is limited. One of the first questions asked by practitioners in examining a conflict is "who are the parties?" The parties, in a literal sense, did not exist prior to this question. Instead, there were people who were, to varying degrees, participating in and being affected by the conflict. These people had identities and allegiances and may have

even taken up arms for one group or another, but the analytical distinction of party, in effect, chooses a side for them. It does so in a way that may be more totalizing than life in the conflict. “Party” is an understandable simplification, from the perspective of the practitioner, but not one that should be accepted uncritically.

The positive implication of this de-atomization is that it lays the groundwork for an appeal to this greater commonality. Adam Curle references Thich Nhat Hahn’s “inter-being” in this sense, an awareness of interdependence²¹. The peace community is likely to use a term like “shared humanity,” or, in an earlier time, “human brotherhood.” This is where appeals to empathy and interdependence in conflict resolution arise.

The third step is to recognize that focusing on the potential causes of conflict is unlikely to help in this task. A majority of the debates in the field of conflict resolution are between people arguing about different conflict causes or the correct intervention form to address those causes (as opposed to that portion of conflict analysis examining the process of conflict). The fact that this is hotly debated illustrates it is not a good location for seeking consensus on the subject, but even more clearly we need to see that the conflict resolution subject is something that exists prior to the cause of any particular conflict. The subject must exist prior to the issues that are fought over. Otherwise, there would not be a conflict. Human needs or scarcity, for example, do not create conflictual subjection.

There are two directions from which we can pin down the conflict resolution subject, first the elements of classification used in referring to those in conflict and, second, the characteristics of the subject referenced. Classification is a good place to start because the conflict resolution perspective becomes clear very quickly. As a regulatory technology, conflict resolution has a seemingly endless stream of ways of dividing the people involved in conflict. To which party do they belong? Are they a stakeholder, and agent, a leader? Are they a primary or secondary participant? Are they present in the conflict or a diasporic supporter? All of these serve to reinforce notions of those individuals who should (or can) be involved in the conflict resolution process. This is not to argue that these are the only questions asked. Clearly we also look at questions about conflict typologies, empirical relationships, and so on, but for our purposes here the questions about people best illustrate the regulatory function.

This process is reinforced through some strong categorical dualisms. The first is between victim and perpetrator. As practitioners, we are always calculating who, in our opinion, is more at fault and who shares less of the blame. Some individuals are going to be victims and some perpetrators. This does not necessarily map to party boundaries. Some people on both sides could be victims and some could be perpetrators. Once this categorization is done, we have a hard time seeing these individuals in other ways and, therefore, this can shape our expectations of them through the process. As we will see below, this sympathy for the victim manifests in the characteristics of the conflict resolution subject.

This relates to the second dualism, between soldier and noncombatant. In a black and white world, this distinction makes sense, but in reality contemporary conflicts are seldom fought between uniformed, identifiable, full-time soldiers. Even so, our discourse and practice reinforce this division through the recognition of military titles, presuming military leaders can speak for territory under their control, and even in post-conflict work that addresses ex-soldier “re-integration.” It is interesting that in a country ravaged by civil war where the social structure has become unhinged, it is only the soldiers who need to be “re-integrated.” One implication of this is that the post-transition conflict resolution subject is distanced from the military actor.

The most important of these dualisms is between the good-faith actor and the spoiler. We rely on the term “spoiler” for anyone who is not working with us to resolve the conflict or, in more direct terms, someone who is not playing along. The good-faith actor is attempting resolution through correct regulatory methods (communication and the use of a third party, in most cases), while the spoiler is either refusing any part of the resolution process or actively seeking to undermine. In conflict resolution, the metaphor of the table is central here. Spoilers either do not deserve or do not have a seat at the table. However, this is made more complex by the fact that the conflict resolution practitioner may have some power in determining who is at the table. For Burton, this was one of the rules of the problem-solving workshop approach. The intervenor has a responsibility not only to determine who is willing to come to the table, but who is allowed to. Carpenter and Kennedy label the kinds of people who have to be convinced to participate “powerful, angry, or suspicious.”²² Clearly, these are not rep-

representative of the optimal conflict resolution subject.

So what are the characteristics of the conflict resolution subject? First, we should note that many of the characteristics of individuals in conflict that are given a lot of attention in the literature should not be considered, because the characteristics of individuals in conflict are not the same as the characteristics of the conflict resolution subject. For example, many conflicts are explained as involving “identity disputes.” Should we therefore see the conflict resolution subject as “identified”? I do not think so. Identity, in this case, is malleable and not universally relevant in the conflict or conflict resolution endeavors. Some conflicts simply do not involve deep-seated identity issues. The conflict resolution subject precedes conflict issues, so we must conclude that, for example, identity is something the conflict resolution subject has, not something it is. As such, identity is irrelevant for the conflict resolution project until there is a conflict.

Understanding these dualities, what characteristics make up the conflict resolution subject? The first of these is that the subject is empowerable. By this I mean to indicate two related concepts. Initially, the conflict resolution subject is one that has the potential for change. The subject is not essential, at least not in ways that would impede the resolution of conflict. This comes across in the discourse most clearly in reference to human nature. Works in conflict resolution go out of their way to undermine the notion that humans have a fixed nature that puts them always in conflict with each other. Such a subject, characterized by the unstoppable drive to fight, cannot be part of the conflict resolution project. Instead, the field sees a subject that either possesses a nonconflictual nature, as those who stress the element of cooperation in human nature do, or that human nature itself is non-essential and any appearance that it is so is the result of social construction.²³ The commonality between both of these positions is that there is no essential obstacle to conflict resolution in the subject. Conflict resolution, however, goes further with this in the second concept. Not only is there nothing that will prevent the resolution of conflicts, but the conflict resolution subject is one that is capable of change, able to be empowered to make a difference.

For the conflict resolution subject, this empowerment comes through participation in the conflict resolution project. The practitioner is the agent of empowerment and transition. Bush and Folger, for example, discuss the potential of “transformation” and “moral growth” in mediation²⁴ and note that “through mediation, people find ways to avoid succumbing to conflict’s most destructive pressures: to act from weakness rather than strength and to dehumanize rather than to acknowledge each other.”²⁵ This empowerment comes about primarily through the application of information and communication by the practitioner, for “parties involved can choose to make things better or worse, but they usually are not aware that they have options.”²⁶

Some authors go farther to reinforce that it is the presence not only of a third party, but of specifically trained and skilled practitioners, that is required for the subject to be able to change. In fact, this was Rule One in John Burton’s discussion of problem-solving workshops.²⁷ Ronald Fisher argues that conflict resolution can only happen in the presence of the third party.²⁸ What we see here is the mixture of some threads already discussed. The subject is perfectible, but this perfectibility is activated by actors outside them, their Others (the third party). This would seem to reinforce the dualism between victim and perpetrator. It is the victim who is most in need to empowerment and, therefore, the larger focus of conflict resolution activity. It is no surprise that in recent years as the notion of neutrality has been being dismantled we have seen an increase in calls for empowerment of the disadvantaged in mediation. The disadvantaged party is the one that is closer to the ideal subject for conflict resolution. It has the capability of action and transformation, but does not have the agency to undertake it. This is a different approach than you see in a project like nonviolent transformation, where the potential for change is located in the powerful, who are encouraged to make a decision to no longer use their power for domination.

The second characteristic of the conflict resolution subject extends from Carpenter and Kennedy’s comment that parties can change, but lack awareness. One on hand, this implies empowerment is possible, but it also implies an implicit rationality on the part of the subject. This subject is capable of understanding more than its pure phenomenological experience of the conflict. This is a form of rationality: the subject’s ability to incorporate non-obvious information about the conflict, evaluate it, and take action. Bush and Folger go so far as to make this seem almost mystical in saying that participants can have “at some level” insights into the unseen working of the conflict.²⁹ Mayer recognizes this as the “cognitive component” of resolution, in which he argues participants have their own ability to recognize when a conflict has been resolved and to decide to put it behind them.³⁰ Wil-

liam Ury is willing to consider this ability the fundamental component of human nature and uses the term “Homo Negotiator.”³¹

There are two important limits on the rationality of the conflict resolution subject. First, as Moore reminds us, there are interests that can be appreciated by the parties, but these are not obvious to them until the mediator assists in exposing them.³² While this rationality exists within the subject, it is not “activated” without the intervention of the Other. Second, this rationality extends to the unseen components of the conflict and the subject’s environment, it does not appear that conflict resolution extends this rationality to abstract systems of oppression. We may talk of conflict being influenced by systems and structures, such as patriarchy, capitalism, or militarism, but the conflict resolution project does not attempt an intervention on these directly. Instead, it relies on the “peace virus” hope. One of the reasons for this is that the conflict resolution subject can be rational about its position and experience, but this rationality is limited to the actions of other subjects. You can mediate between people, groups, or nations, but it is not possible to mediate between someone and capitalism, for instance. Contemporary conflict resolution practice is clearly the wrong tool for direct modification or elimination of structural and system-level causes of conflict. This is not to say that new forms of practice cannot develop to address these concerns, but no satisfactory answers have arisen from our current options.

The third characteristic of the conflict resolution subject is that it is social, constructed through relationships and communication. Mayer, for example, argues bluntly that “at the heart of both conflict and resolution are communication.”³³ Lang and Taylor say that “interaction is the water in which people swim, the air we breathe, and in terms of mediation, the essential medium in which dialogue occurs.”³⁴ In the context of transformational mediation, this is made even more clear when Bush and Folger adopt an entirely relational view of human nature.³⁵ The implication here is not only that the subject is constructed through relations, but that it is interdependent with other subjects. This may be seen as essential to the human condition or a function of more recent changes, as in William Ury’s claim that “never before in human evolution have people faced the challenge of living in a single community with billions of human beings.”³⁶ What is important is that conflict resolution recognizes both communication and interdependence as the primary elements of the social subject.

From these characteristics it is clear that the conflict resolution subject is incomplete. It has the potential for change and transformation, but this cannot occur until the intervention by a specific Other. This illustrates the final vital component of the conflict resolution subject. It is transitional. Conflict resolution sees in the actors in the conflict the social, rational, and potential characteristics of the conflict resolution subject and then uses the communicative tools of conflict resolution to fulfill the transition from belligerent to subject. It is more accurate to say, within the jargon of the field, that the conflict resolution project is, ultimately, about the transition of belligerents into “parties.” Belligerents are the perpetrators, the soldiers, the spoilers. Parties are those who can be safely brought into the conflict resolution process, those who are oriented toward constructive engagement, those who will act “in good faith.” Although Winslade and Monk do not recognize the terminology of the subject, I think they are getting at the same idea when they state that “mediation is a site where social action is always taking place, rather than just being talked about.”³⁷

Interestingly, while the work of constructing subjects examined by Butler and Foucault primarily occurs out-of-sight, conflict resolution is very up front about this component of its project. It wants to use its tools to reproduce empowered, post-transition conflict resolution subjects, but of course the discourse refers to the desire to help parties realize their potential, make better decisions, act better, or limit the damage their decisions are causing. In short, conflict resolution wants to re-constitute them as slightly different (and from its own perspective, substantially improved subjects).

What does the fully transitioned conflict resolution subject look like? It is empowered, thinking in line with conflict resolution rationality, and an active agent in its own conflicts, possessing both the skills and perspective to engage constructively. In short, it is the practitioner. The conflict resolution subject, in its pure form, collapses into its Other: the practitioner who actively facilitated the transition. It is no wonder that so many people begin working in the field after having a successful experience with a conflict resolution practitioner as a party in a conflict. These people will often talk about how the conflict resolution experience was novel, so different from their normal way of doing things. It “opened their eyes.” But what it really did was exactly what it intends to do: create more realized conflict resolution subjects. In a world full of conflict resolution subjects, there is no need for a mediator, since no one needs assistance to see what the mediator sees or to understand the opponent who,

of course, is another realized conflict resolution subject. This is the reason that negotiation practice can be considered part of conflict resolution yet still be set aside in the analysis of the subject. Good negotiation, the kind practiced when both sides are using win-win principals based on a model like *Getting to Yes*,³⁸ can only occur between realized conflict resolution subjects, those that have made the transition. Bad negotiation requires an intervention and turns into mediation, which seeks to transition the negotiating parties into good negotiators ("good" defined from the perspective of the conflict resolution project). Good negotiators are realized conflict resolution subjects.

This account should not be allowed to go unchallenged and there are a number of apparent criticisms to consider. The first of these is that the conflict resolution subject is apparently free of gender, race, and class. This is true. Much like identity, gender, race, and class are embodied on the subject rather than an essential part of it. This could be justified through an appeal to Butler to show that gender (and sex) are not essential, or someone like Paul Gilroy to show the same of race,³⁹ but in the case of conflict resolution, such dramatic responses do not seem necessary. Race, class, and gender arise within the conflict resolution project three different ways: as claims that people of different races, classes, or genders "do" conflict in different ways, claims that people of different races, classes, or genders get involved in different kinds of conflicts, or claims that resolution is impossible without the inclusion of representatives of a particular race, class, or gender. None of these claims is threatening to the idea of a conflict resolution subject. In fact, when we see the conflict resolution subject as being instantiated prior to gender, class, and race it becomes clear that the categorization of participants in resolution activities is the kind of regulative restriction that Butler cautions against. Adding additional requirements for participation may be just limiting the spread of the conflict resolution subject. However, the arbitrary exclusion of individuals from the conflict resolution process on the basis of race, gender, or class would do the same. I am not arguing against the reasonable, practical concerns that lead to the desire for inclusion of participants on the basis of gender, race, or class, but noting that in the ideal relation to the conflict resolution subject, this would not be necessary.

A second criticism is that the idea of a constituted, transitional conflict resolution subject undermines those who wish to argue that conflict resolution is actually the most "natural" human response to conflict. This idea is seen from biologists like Franz de Waal⁴⁰ as well as the peace movement, which often promotes peaceful relations as a return to nature. This criticism is accurate, but hardly a threat to the overall conflict resolution project, which promotes itself more on the grounds of utility and morality than ideas of nature.

The third criticism is that this view of the subject challenges recent efforts, most prominently by John Paul Lederach,⁴¹ to develop an elicitive model of practice that "draws out" the mechanism of resolution from the parties themselves. If the conflict resolution project is actually constituting the subject, is there room for the practitioner to build a process from the parties to the conflict instead of imposing a model from above? The answer is both no and yes. It is not possible to avoid the subject-constituting actions of the conflict resolution discourse, since this will have strong influence over the individuals participating in the process. However, the fact that the conflict resolution subject is perfectible and can be empowered actually presumes that it will be doing a lot of the work. The conflict resolution project is not to force solutions, but to get the parties (subjects) to a position where they can make decisions about their conflict through interaction with each other. There would appear to be a lot of leeway there for elicitive practice, although any claim that such an approach does not also constitute a subject in the image of conflict resolution would be an error.

A fourth criticism relates to justice. Is there room for retributive justice within the conflict resolution project? The tension between justice and peace has been well-documented, as has the difficulty of integrating the two in post-conflict situations, such as John Paul Lederach's *Journey toward Reconciliation*.⁴² In practical terms, the decision often is framed as "do we punish or negotiate?" The analysis above produces a definitive answer from the context of the conflict resolution process. We likely cannot bring punishment and retributive justice into conflict resolution, at least not as they are traditionally constituted. If the conflict resolution process has been successful, the subject of retributive justice no longer exists. The new subject, the post-transition subject, cannot be the one that committed bad acts in the past. This is not an attempt at clever legal reasoning, but a recognition that the totally constituted conflict resolution subject is the end product of something like a reconciliation process. After reconciliation, what is the point of retributive justice? This does not mean that someone could not willingly accept punishment as part of the process of conflict resolution, perhaps to atone for past deeds or illustrate good faith support of the process, but this comes from a position of agency,

not the powerless, incarcerated individual who is the criminal subject.

The final criticism is the most serious. One critique that has been leveled at the field of conflict resolution in the past is that it is neither transformative nor revolutionary, but actually promotes the docility of individuals in the face of systemic oppression. This is the idea behind Anatol Rapaport's warning that international conflict resolution could become (or already is) a tool of the powerful to regulate resistance.⁴³ Toran Hansen argues that conflict resolution can avoid these problems, but only by engaging in critical activity and actively seeking both short-term and long-term social justice through "critical conflict resolution practice."⁴⁴ There is a complicating factor to consider, however.

Privileged/non-privileged is another dualistic binary that covers much more variety than it illuminates. Foucault's approach to power illustrates that we cannot simply divide the powerful from the powerless, but that power is situational, discourse-driven, and often untethered from actors. It is not enough to try, as Galtung did, to separate the "top dogs" from the "underdogs."⁴⁵ This response, however, opens up conflict resolution to a larger critique: that it contributes to domination through these exact forms of power.

Foucault states that for him, "The problem is not changing people's consciousness – of what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth."⁴⁶ The conflict resolution project described in this essay is initially a consciousness-changing one. The ultimate goal may be to engage "the production of truth," but the path from even an overwhelming number of realized conflict resolution subjects to that is not clear.

Additionally, the discussion of the subject above reinforces the idea that conflict resolution discourse is regulative. It categorizes and divides individuals based on their applicability to the conflict resolution process. Butler reminds us that all regulatory processes are, at base, subjugating. Beyond just categorization, it is clear that the purpose of the conflict resolution process is to eliminate some forms of human behavior – those that contribute to destructive conflict such as violence, dehumanization, and the like. It also tends to value harmony over conflict, even when conflict could be constructive.⁴⁷ From the perspective of a totally liberated human subject, this is clearly a form of control and subjugation.

We are left to weigh this subjugation against the costs of the conflict resolution projects and the benefits and likelihood of its success. Ultimately, this is an ethical and moral decision, which means that it can only be made from a particular subject-position. From within the conflict resolution project, the answer is clearly "of course it is worth the cost," while from other perspectives it may not be.

However, there is one mitigating factor that makes the conflict resolution perspective gain some moral and ethical authority. The creation of the conflict resolution subject is a process that is not purely hidden deep in unrecognized discourse. The tools of conflict resolution are not hidden from the participants. In fact, some approaches thrive specifically on the explanation of what tools are being used and how they are expected to operate. Conflict resolution practitioners speak openly of the kinds of changes they are trying to bring about in participants in the process. This is not just somewhat more open and transparent than the way gender and sex are constructed, for example, but radically so. In fact, the push for "reflective practice" specifically encourages practitioners to understand their constitutive effects (albeit with different terminology) as when Lang and Taylor specifically ask that practitioners interrogate their "constellation of theories" in order to more fully understand why they have the perceptions they do and to ensure their actions best suit the conflict – or, best serve the project.⁴⁸ In the terminology favored by Žižek, the conflict resolution project is more aware of its unknown knowns, more willing to make them known knowns, and more interesting in spreading that information to those served by the project. We are left to conclude that while the conflict resolution project is a form of subjugation, it is, ultimately, a relatively benign subjugation.

In light of these criticisms, what can this analysis suggest for the future of the conflict resolution project. First, we should focus on the transition to the realized conflict resolution subject. This means that the most important technologies of practice are those that encourage belligerents to become parties and those that help parties move closer to the conflict resolution ideal. These are more likely to come from work with communication and interaction than focus on conflict causes or, to a lesser extent, conflict dynamics. The real work of conflict resolution is figuring out the techniques of intervention that make the transition more reliable and easier for those involved. Second, it is clear that the conflict resolution project has an inability to address system-level causes of conflict. In the terms of this essay, system-level conflict is that which is not directly caused by the actions of any

identifiable subject, but is instantiated through discourse, economic system, cultures of violence, and so on. Even if the conflict resolution project is wildly successful, it will eventually come up against these systems. At that point (if not sooner), the project will either need to be abandoned in favor of a more revolutionary perspective or significantly modified. Finally, the recognition of the regulatory aspect of the conflict resolution project means we need to keep a vigilant eye on the potential domination that can occur within our project.

Endnotes

- 1 Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*.
- 2 Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*.
- 3 Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*.
- 4 Butler, *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*.
- 5 Moore, *The Mediation Process*.
- 6 Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution*.
- 7 Winslade and Monk, *Narrative Mediation*.
- 8 Bush and Folger, *The Promise of Mediation*.
- 9 See, for example, Susan L. Carpenter and W.J.D Kennedy, *Managing Public Disputes: A Practical Guide to Handling Conflict and Reaching Agreements*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988) and Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict In Nations, Organizations, and Communities*.
- 10 See, for example, John Burton, *Resolving deep-rooted conflict* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987) and Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution*.
- 11 Pavlich, "The Power of Community Mediation," 716.
- 12 Bagshaw, "The Three M's - Mediation, Postmodernism, and the New Millennium."
- 13 Morgan Brigg, "Mediation, Power, and Cultural Difference," *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (2003): 287-306 and Brigg, "Governance and Susceptibility in Conflict Resolution."
- 14 Bush and Folger, *The Promise of Mediation*, xi, 1.
- 15 Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research."
- 16 Burton, "Conflict Resolution as a Political Philosophy."
- 17 Curle, *Education for liberation*, 137.
- 18 Crary, "Community benefits from mediation," 241.
- 19 Žižek, *Violence : six sideways reflections*, 155.
- 20 Curle, *Education for liberation*, v.
- 21 Curle, *Another Way: Positive Response to Contemporary Violence*, 141.
- 22 See Winslade and Monk, *Narrative Mediation*, 225.
- 23 See *Ibid.*, 37-39.
- 24 Bush and Folger, *The Promise of Mediation*, 2.
- 25 *Ibid.*, xv.
- 26 Carpenter and Kennedy, *Managing Public Disputes*, xi.
- 27 Burton, *Resolving deep-rooted conflict*, 33.
- 28 Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution*, 8.
- 29 Bush and Folger, *The Promise of Mediation*, 10.
- 30 Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution*, 98.
- 31 Ury, *Getting to Peace*, 197.
- 32 Moore, *The Mediation Process*, 231.
- 33 Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution*, 119.
- 34 Lang and Taylor, *The Making of a Mediator*, 153.
- 35 Bush and Folger, *The Promise of Mediation*, 54.
- 36 Ury, *Getting to Peace*, xvii.
- 37 Winslade and Monk, *Narrative Mediation*, 40.
- 38 Fisher and Ury, *Getting to Yes*.
- 39 Gilroy, *'There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack'*.
- 40 Waal, *Peacemaking among primates*.
- 41 Lederach, *Building Peace*.
- 42 Lederach, *The Journey Toward Reconciliation*.
- 43 Rapoport, "Can Peace Research Be Applied?," 417.
- 44 Hansen, "Critical conflict resolution theory and practice," 417.
- 45 Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Aggression."
- 46 Foucault, *The essential Foucault : selections from essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, 317.
- 47 Brigg, "Mediation, Power, and Cultural Difference," 287.
- 48 Lang and Taylor, *The Making of a Mediator*, 93.

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Sweatshop Tourism

By Jay Filipi

As someone that likes to travel, I am aware that tourism, as any form of commercial venture, is itself an exploitative activity: We are using a culture for our enjoyment; and we have the capital to do so, which we flaunt in the face of those we meet. Furthermore, after traveling the world and experiencing many regions of the world in a variety of capacities and levels of comfort, I understand that some forms of tourism are more exploitative than others. However, I do believe I felt the whole range of exploitation during a trip through China, and never so much like the embodiment of the darkside of American citizen mission work as when I toured a cloisonne factory.

While, in this case, “sweatshop” may not be the most accurate term, it is a term which is close enough to the heart of the matter that further parsing may only confuse the matter. What the tourist destination was, was a cloisonne factory, shop and restaurant on the way from Xi’an to the Terra Cotta Soldiers. As with any tourist destination, tourists are invited to consume; one such commodity was the factory tour. As with any standard tour, there was a bit of history, a few corny jokes, some physics and demonstrations. The demonstration was how exactly cloisonne is created.

Cloisonne, decorative enamelled metalware, is apparently created in very cramped, dark, hot, poorly ventilated areas, where workers perched on stools, hunched over their stations, design pieces using toxic chemicals create more toxic chemicals in order to create something beautiful sold for more money then the crafter will see all year to tourists that will take it away from the country of origin. The tourists, of course, are shielded from the fumes and chemicals by a layer of

clear plexiglass which facilitates the demonstration by allowing a layer of safety.

I went to China expecting a lot of things. Mostly I expected there to be an opacity to things western travelers might not agree with. Instead, I found Sweatshops plainly marketed as a tourist destination: A ‘matryoshka doll’ of exploitation.

I have my ambivalence about the exploitation of tourism in general and specifically in poor and developing areas of the world where I plainly flaunt my Western affluence and liberty. At this I was appalled: This was just a less graphic form of the Colosseum games and we were the spectators. The paradox was, that I could now make a conscious decision not to buy anything from this shop, and yet I had just been party to a ticket to watch a human zoo of misery.



For more information on sweatshops:

<http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/economic/sweat.htm>

http://home.sandiego.edu/~mzwolinski/Sweatshops_essay_web.pdf

http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-5923802/Nike-to-the-rescue-Africa.html

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Photo credit: Jay Filipi

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